

Getting Around Town



After decades of neglect, infrastructure improvements are badly needed. Our goal is that these improvements help to preserve and enhance the historic character of the Midtown Neighborhoods and help support our revitalization efforts. — Rick Reyna, Executive Director of MidTown on Blanco

Introduction

This chapter of the Midtown Neighborhoods Plan focuses on the neighborhoods' goals, objectives and action steps for enhancing the pedestrian network, ensuring high quality mass transit and transit facilities, creating a bicycle network and reducing the impact of railroad operations on the neighborhoods.

Currently, the neighborhood is well-served by public transit and has a street pattern that allows for good traffic flow due to multiple routes between destinations.

The goals, objectives, action steps, timelines, lead partners, proposed partnerships and proposed funding sources were developed by Work Group members with the assistance of city staff and other agency representatives (see Appendix C).

Lead Partners are groups who have volunteered to begin the work of developing the partnerships necessary to implement the action steps. The Lead Partners will serve as coordinators to bring together all of the groups needed to achieve the proposed action. An initial listing of these groups is included under the proposed partnerships. The community also identified potential funding sources for their action steps. The community could approach these funding sources once the work of coordination is complete.

Goal 1: Multi-Modal Transportation System

Coordinate with the City of San Antonio and local transportation providers to ensure a safe, efficient, well-maintained, appropriately engineered and aesthetically appealing multi-modal transportation system.

Objective 1.1: Pedestrian Network

Restore the pedestrian-friendly neighborhood environment by creating a pedestrian network that is safe, aesthetically appealing and effective.

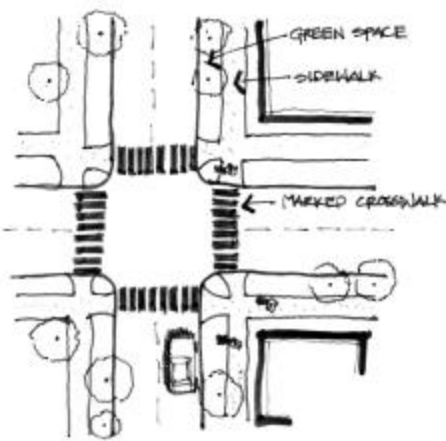
Action Steps:

1.1.1 Develop a long-term pedestrian facilities plan that creates a neighborhood network, identifies gaps and provides implementation measures. The MPO's Pedestrian Mobility Task Force is available to guide and assist in the implementation of pedestrian facilities.

- Timeline: Long (6 or more years)
- Lead Partners: NAs
- Proposed Partnerships: COSA Public Works Dept., City Council Representative, MPO
- Proposed Funding Sources: Economic Development Administration (EDA), Capital Improvement Funds, Bond Issue, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

1.1.2 Develop a short-term pedestrian facilities plan that addresses neighborhood linkages to generators and attractors, design issues and project implementation:

- Identify primary pedestrian routes, specifically those that link schools and transit stops.
- Allow for greenspace between the sidewalk and the curb.
- Create/Implement pedestrian facility design guidelines to address lighting, scale, planting strips, curbs and sidewalks to conform to community needs and to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Install/Improve sidewalks in areas identified as primary pedestrian routes.
 - Timeline: Short to Mid (2 - 3 years)
 - Lead Partners: NAs, MidTown Design Committee, City Council Representative



The above sketch illustrates the neighborhoods' desire for a connecting pedestrian network that includes a greenspace next to the curb and ramps for the disabled.

Midtown Neighborhoods Plan

- Proposed Partnerships: VIA, Schools, COSA Public Works Dept.
- Proposed Funding Sources: Volunteer Labor, COSA Public Works Dept's Neighborhood Accessibility & Mobility Program (NAMP) - new sidewalks only, 1999 Bond Issue, MPO

Objective 1.2: Mass Transit – Service

Coordinate with VIA Metropolitan Transit to improve service delivery and develop new transit routes through the neighborhood.

Action Steps:

1.2.1 Advocate for the proposed light rail system route through the neighborhood (Transit 2025 Vision Report, January 1999) including multiple stops to link the neighborhood with the downtown area. A 1/4 cent sales tax increase referendum to fund a light rail system was voted down in May 2000. A future funding source is unknown.

- Timeline: Short (1-2 years)
- Lead Partners: NAs
- Proposed Partnerships: VIA
- Proposed Funding Sources: Volunteers

1.2.2 Advocate for expansion of motorized transit routes that serve the neighborhood:

- Downtown trolley line to San Pedro Park.
- Circulator service (i.e. a "Historic Trolley" line) to serve the MidTown area, including Hildebrand, on weekends and for special tourist events (bungalow home tours and arts & crafts events). VIA does not recommend expansion of service for MidTown at this time, since a high level of service is already provided which includes 12 bus routes that are located within a ¼ mile (about a five minute walk) of 99% of the Midtown area. (VIA Report, Feasibility of Streetcar Service for Midtown Area, May 2000.)
- Service delivery to area healthcare facilities.
 - Timeline: Short to Mid (1-5 years)
 - Lead Partners: NAs, VIA (Customer Service Needs Assessment Program)
 - Proposed Partnerships: University Health System, Hospitals
 - Proposed Funding Sources: VIA, COSA, University Health System, Foundations



Example of light rail transit



Example of light rail transit on the left and, on the right, a historic trolley that runs on rails

Objective 1.3: Mass Transit – Facilities/ Amenities

Provide direct support to VIA Metropolitan Transit to promote the design and installation of transit amenities that are unique to the Midtown Neighborhoods area.

Action Steps:

1.3.1 Coordinate with VIA to design and develop new passenger amenities throughout the neighborhood area:

- Incorporate children, artists and citizens in the design and production of amenities that are unique and reflect the character of this neighborhood's commercial corridors.
- Assist in the development of amenities that include but are not limited to landscaping, bus shelters (without advertising), benches, public phones, trash receptacles, and pull-outs, bulbs, and bus stop pads for safe boarding and alighting.
- This action step is consistent with the CRAG 2000 Recommendations.

- Timeline: Short (1-2 years)
- Lead Partners: NAs, MidTown on Blanco
- Proposed Partnerships: VIA (Customer Service Needs Assessment Program) , COSA
- Proposed Funding Sources: VIA (Federal Transit Administration Enhancement Program), Volunteer Labor, COSA Community Arts Program, Public Works Dept., Neighborhood Improvement Challenge Program

1.3.2 Assess the impact of VIA's facility operations on the surrounding neighborhoods and develop a plan to capture economic development opportunities and mitigate any perceived negative impacts.

- Timeline: Long (6 or more years)
- Lead Partners: NAs, Five Points NA
- Proposed Partnerships: VIA
- Proposed Funding Sources: VIA (FTA Enhancement Program), Economic Development Administration (EDA), T-21 Transportation Community System Preservation Pilot Program (Federal Highway Administration)



Examples of bus stops that reflect the neighborhood's character

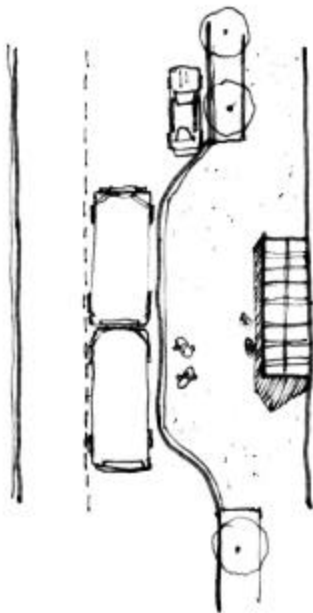


Illustration of a bus bulb

Midtown Neighborhoods Plan

Objective 1.4: Bicycle Networks

Create a network of bike routes that will connect points of interest within the neighborhood and throughout San Antonio. (also see Community Places Where We Play, Gather and Learn Action Step 1.1.2)

Action Steps:

1.4.1 Identify bike routes on local streets and collectors that parallel major arterials through the neighborhood.

- Identify bike lanes with pavement striping.
- Consider adding bike lanes along North Flores between Ashby and Lynwood, along Grant between Cincinnati and Hildebrand, paths to and from San Pedro Springs Park as well as other future identified bike routes.

- Timeline: Short (1-2 years)
- Lead Partners: NAs
- Proposed Partnerships: MPO, COSA, Bicycle Clubs
- Proposed Funding Sources: MPO, T-21 Enhancement Program, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

1.4.2 Work with the City to plan, design, and build the bike routes identified above.

- Timeline: Long (6 or more years)
- Lead Partners: NAs
- Proposed Partnerships: COSA, MPO, Bicycle Clubs
- Proposed Funding Sources: MPO, T-21 Enhancement Program, CDBG

Objective 1.5: Traffic Safety and Parking

Ensure safety for pedestrians and cars by eliminating traffic hazards, maximizing existing off-street parking facilities and providing on-street parking.

Action Steps:

1.5.1 Conduct a study to determine off-street parking supply and demand and develop a master plan to identify creative ways to capture off-street parking that preserves the existing streetscape without removing buildings within commercial centers.

- Timeline: Short (1-2 years)
- Lead Partners: MidTown on Blanco, NAs, new

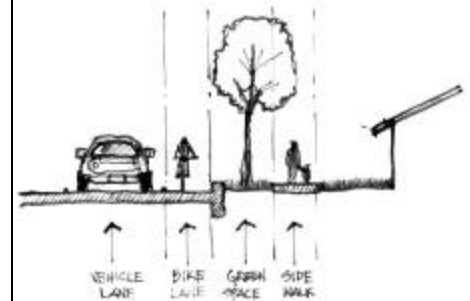


Illustration of a bike lane

Midtown Neighborhoods Plan



Example of screened parking



Example of behind business parking. The parking entrance is located under the Café Camille sign.



Example of on-street parking

Merchants' Assns.

- Proposed Partnerships: MidTown on Blanco, NAs
- Proposed Funding Sources: MidTown on Blanco, NAs

1.5.2 Encourage neighborhood businesses to incorporate landscaping screens and pedestrian amenities into existing off-street parking facilities.

- Timeline: Short to Mid (1-5 years)
- Lead Partners: MidTown on Blanco, NAs, new Merchants' Assns.
- Proposed Partnerships: MidTown on Blanco
- Proposed Funding Sources: Neighborhood Businesses

1.5.3 Encourage and enhance on-street parking in the planning area's commercial districts to improve street activity.

- Timeline: Short to Mid (1 - 5 years)
- Lead Partners: MidTown on Blanco, NAs, new Merchants' Assns.
- Proposed Partnerships: COSA Public Works Dept.
- Proposed Funding Sources: COSA

1.5.4 Coordinate with the COSA Public Works Department to conduct school zone traffic studies to eliminate safety hazards and congestion through improved signalization, pavement markings, and signage. Specific guidelines exist that govern the placement of signage and pavement markings.

- Timeline: Short (1-2 years)
- Lead Partners: MidTown on Blanco, NAs
- Proposed Partnerships: MidTown on Blanco, COSA Public Works Dept., TxDOT District Office
- Proposed Funding Sources: COSA Public Works Dept. School Flashers Program, MPO, TxDOT Hazard Elimination Safety Program (HESP)

Midtown Neighborhoods Plan

1.5.5 Coordinate with the COSA Public Works and Police Departments to improve traffic flow at intersections, enforce speed limits and explore speeding controls, including but not limited to the following:

- traffic control on San Pedro between Summit & Hildebrand,
- left turn signal when heading west on Hildebrand to turn left onto San Pedro,
- left turn signal and turn lane at Blanco to turn onto Hildebrand,
- stop signs at Breeden and Craig, Breeden and French, Breeden and Ashby, and Myrtle and Flores.
 - Timeline: Short (1-2 years)
 - Lead Partners: NAs
 - Proposed Partnerships: COSA Public Works Dept.; TxDOT District Office
 - Proposed Funding Sources: COSA Public Works Dept.; HESP

1.5.6 Coordinate with the COSA Public Works Department and property owners to address poor visibility along neighborhood streets including but not limited to the following:

- Blanco Road (excluding all Beacon Hill pillars),
- San Pedro, and
- Flores, south of Myrtle, where on-street parking by VIA employees creates visibility problems.
 - Timeline: Short to Mid (1-5 years)
 - Lead Partners: NAs
 - Proposed Partnerships: COSA Public Works Dept.; TxDOT
 - Proposed Funding Sources: COSA Public Works

Objective 1.6: Railroad Right-of-Way and Operations

Ensure resident safety and mitigate impacts of rail operations on the neighborhoods.

Action Steps:

1.6.1 Encourage Union Pacific Railroad to relocate freight traffic to other lines.

- Timeline: Long (6 or more years)
- Lead Partners: NAs
- Proposed Partnerships: Union Pacific RR,

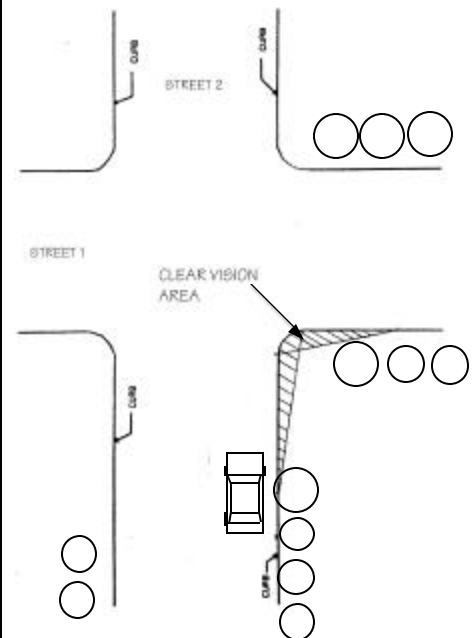


Illustration of a clear vision area. By maintaining an area free of obstructions to the line of sight, drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians are able to see oncoming traffic.

Federal Railroad Administration

- Proposed Funding Sources: Union Pacific RR

1.6.2. Improve at-grade crossings, warning signage, signalization and track maintenance throughout neighborhood.

- Timeline: Short to Mid (1-5 years)
- Lead Partners: NAs
- Proposed Partnerships: Union Pacific RR, Railwatch (National Non-profit Organization)
- Proposed Funding Sources: Union Pacific RR, COSA Public Works Dept.

1.6.3 Investigate noise abatement options including application to the Federal Railroad Administration for a “quiet zone”, planting of trees to serve as sound barriers, and amendments to Unified Development Code to allow for sound absorbing walls on properties adjacent to railroad rights-of-way.

- Timeline: Short (1-2 years)
- Lead Partners: NAs
- Proposed Partnerships: Union Pacific RR, COSA Planning Dept., Federal Railroad Administration
- Proposed Funding Sources: Minimal cost



Midtown Neighborhoods Plan

MAP HERE